



Lance Cpl. Brian Kester  
**Daniel M. Schlund, a player with PCD, takes aim and prepares to throw the ball to an awaiting teammate during practice Nov. 13.**

# Teams prepare to face off in intramural flag football playoffs

**LANCE CPL. BRIAN KESTER**  
*STAFF WRITER*

Grunts, growls and glory all played distinctive roles during the Intramural Flag Football regular season.

With the season complete and the playoffs underway, the players and coaches remembered the season, and considered their chances in the play-offs.

“We will change the way we play our offense and defense in the play-offs,” said Casper Stephens, Clothing’s coach. “So, expect to see a second side to Clothing.”

While Clothing (13-1) is making changes to ensure their success in the playoffs, PCD (5-9) is satisfied with where they stand.

“We’ve been doing alright,” said Wayne Crocker, a PCD player. “We lost a couple of games that we should have won, but it is our first year having a team in the league, so we are just getting a feel for it.”

Although PCD is a newly-formed team, they tried to have fun with the games they played and tried to learn a little from them.

“We have had fun; that is all we came out here for,” said Crocker, who emphasized the fun-loving spir-

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- Erick Bennett, Dental’s coach

it his team carries with them. “We are catching on here, and we have started to really come together. That was our strategy all along, really.”

While PCD has fun on the field, Crocker believes they try not to lose scope of the reality of where they stand in the big playoff picture.

“There is not much we can do considering it’s our first year, and some of these teams have played together for a couple of years,” said Crocker. “We play to the level of the teams we play. If they are good, we play good; if they play bad, we play down to their level.”

Crocker’s playoff predictions speak of veteran confidence, not first year bravado.

“We will not lose, of that there is no doubt.”

A high level of confidence can get teams through a lot of hard times. If so, Dental (10-4) should go deep into the playoffs.

“We have a lot of high intensity players that are highly motivated and ready to play,” said Erick Bennett, Dental’s coach. “Being a Navy team on a Marine Corps base, we have to step it up and play hard against the Marines. We have been doing that all year and have pulled out some big wins.”

Similar to PCD, Dental took a couple of games to come together, but toward the end of the regular season they were playing big, according to their coach.

“We lost a couple of big games right at the beginning, but we played tough when it came down to winning the big games,” said Bennett.

Bennett is so confident in his team that he sees them sweeping through the playoffs.

“I think we will do very well in the playoffs, and I think we will make it straight through,” said Bennett.

It is easy to be confident before the ball is snapped, but only the play on the field can determine who will go home champions, and who will just go home.

# Steelers teams finish second, third in Lowcountry Bowl

**CPL. ALISHA R. FITZGERALD**  
*STAFF WRITER*

The 8- to 10-year-old and 11- to 12-year-old Marine Corps Community Services-South Carolina Steelers youth football teams finished their 2003 season in the top three of the Beaufort Parks and Leisure Services league in their respective divisions of the Lowcountry Bowl Nov. 8 – Nov. 15.

The younger Steelers were defeated by the St. Helena Panthers 19-18 in the finals of their division at the Burton Wells Complex Saturday, earning the team a second-place trophy. The older Steelers were eliminated in the second round of bowl play by the Hilton Head Gators 20-18 at Barker Field in Hilton Head Nov. 13 to place third overall.

The Panthers, who finished the regular season in first place with a perfect record, were the only team to beat the younger Steelers this year. They were pumped up for their last game and anxious to prove they could upset the league leader.

“The boys were more than ready to play them this time,” said Henry Pennington, coach of the younger Steelers. “We’d had plenty of looks at them this year and we knew what we had to work with and what we needed to do.”

It seemed they knew exactly what to do in the first half as the Steelers jumped on the Panthers early. Dwian Norman, a wing-back for the Steelers, scored on a 23-yard run right off the bat. The extra point play was no good, and the Panthers quickly answered back when they returned a punt all the way to the end zone for 70 yards. They then ran in the extra point to take a 7-6 lead.

The Panthers would not hold the lead for long, however, as the Steelers produced two more touchdowns before the half. Norman scored one of them on a

43-yard run, to get his second of the game. A.J. Taylor, wide receiver, got the last one of the half on a three-yard run. The score was 18-7 at the half.

The control of the game shifted in the second half as the Steelers failed to score again and the Panthers proceeded to make their comeback. The next two touchdowns, which gave the Panthers their lead and final score, were a mirror of each other as running back DeEndre Jefferson Fields scored each on 4-yard runs. Both extra-point plays were in vain and the final points of the game were scored with more than seven minutes left to play – plenty of time for the Steelers to rally.

As the clock ticked down, the Steelers first opportunity arose. They had possession and on the first snap, quarterback Eric Boyles drove for 31 yards. They gained eight yards on the next drive, and 14 more on the next. The Steelers managed a first-and-goal at the four-yard line with less than three minutes to go in the game. The Panthers defense buckled down, however, as they stopped the Steelers’ offense four times, keeping them just ahead of the half-yard line.

The Panthers would be in a dangerous position on their next possession, however, receiving

the ball on the half-yard line in front of their own goal post. The Steelers could still make a safety and win the game. Unfortunately, this time the underdogs would not be served.

Pennington was pleased with the effort, despite the loss.

“You can’t get any closer than that,” he said. “It was a very good game on both sides, and I’m proud of the boys. We had a heck of a season.”

Pennington had set a goal for his team at the beginning of the season to instill the basic fundamentals into each player. To make it to the finals of the Lowcountry Bowl was a feat that far exceeded his and the players’ expectations.

“We’ve come a long way this season,” he said. “Of course, they’re heartbroken over the loss, but to even be in this position is a great accomplishment and I couldn’t have asked for more.”

The older Steelers team did not get their shot at the bowl title like they wanted, but there was some satisfaction in the way their age bracket ended up – the team that eliminated them in round two went on to win the tournament, a team they had beaten in the regular season.

“The ending was bittersweet, in that we fought the eventual league champions, and knowing

that we had beaten them and were quite capable of doing it again,” said Timothy Gardner, the older Steelers coach.

They came close to victory their last game against the Gators, as it also came down to the last few plays of the game. The Steelers had scored a touchdown to come within two and had a chance to tie it with less than eight seconds left on the clock. They went for the two-point conversion, but ran into a slight snag.

“The refs made an incomplete pass call on a play for us that

would have tied the game,” he said. “I know you can’t blame the way a game goes on a call, but that was a tough one.”

The Gators went on to face the older Panthers team for the championship and won 6-0. Gardner was disappointed he and his players did not get a shot at the Panthers, harboring some feelings over a game they had against them earlier in the season.

“We felt we had a score to settle with the Panthers, and we missed the date by two points and 7.9 seconds,” said Gardner, refer-

ring to the incomplete pass call against the Gators.

Putting aside hard feelings and disagreements about calls, Gardner was overall satisfied with the successful season he ended up with.

“I won’t forget this team because we kept it together for 10 games and never quit until the clock hit zero,” he said.

Gardner says he plans to return to coach next year, but said probably only about three of the players will still be here to play for him again.